

HENRY OVERHOLSER MANSION
Heritage Hills Historic and Architectural District
405 15th Street, Northwest
Oklahoma City
Oklahoma
Oklahoma

HALS OK-17
OK-17

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY

HENRY OVERHOLSER MANSION

HALS NO. OK-17

Location: Heritage Hills Historical Preservation District Oklahoma City, Oklahoma County, Oklahoma

Lat: 35.48538 Long: -97.51242

Significance: The Overholser Mansion, an 11,000 square-foot three-story French Chateau styled home accompanied by an additional 4,000 square-foot carriage house, was built in 1903 by prominent and influential Oklahoma City leader Henry Overholser. It was designed by architect W.S. Matthews, who was trained at London's Kensington Academy. Originally built in the country and surrounded by farmland, Mr. and Mrs. Overholser created an eclectic landscape design in a naturalistic style. The mansion was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1970 and is designated as an Oklahoma landmark in the Oklahoma Landmarks Inventory.

History: Businessman Henry Overholser came to Oklahoma City from Ohio shortly after the Land Run of 1889 and quickly established himself as a leader in the new frontier. He played an integral role in the development and growth of Oklahoma City during its early years. In 1889, shortly after his arrival he built the Grand Avenue Hotel, and a year later built an opera house and theater. Additionally, he helped organize a railroad that linked Oklahoma City to Tulsa, Kansas City, and St. Louis.

After only six months in Oklahoma City, Mr. Overholser married Anna Ione Murphy an the eighteen-year-old daughter of a wealthy lawyer. In 1902, after purchasing land in what is now known as Heritage Hills, Overholser began building a 20 room mansion. The mansion was designed by architect W.S. Matthews and was one of the first in the city. The Overholsters created an eclectic, naturalistic landscape design for the property.

Mr. Overholser died in 1915, and in 1937 Mrs. Overholser transferred ownership to the couple's daughter, Henry Ione Overholser-Perry. Subsequently, in 1961 after her death, the property was transferred to her husband David Perry, who then sold the mansion and its furnishings to the Oklahoma Chapter of American Institute of Architects and Historical Preservation Inc. The mansion was later donated to the State of Oklahoma. The Oklahoma Historical Society managed the property from 1982 to 2003, and from 2003 to the present the site has been managed by Preservation Oklahoma.

- Sources: "National Register Properties in Oklahoma: Overholser House," <http://www.oci.okstate.edu/shpo/shpopic.asp?id=70000536> (accessed May 7, 2009).
- "Henry Overholser Mansion." Preservation Oklahoma, Inc., <http://www.overholsermansion.org/> (accessed May 7, 2009).
- Blackburn, Bob L. "Heart of the Promised Land: Oklahoma County." Woodlands Hills, CA: Windsor Publications, 1982.
- Chapman, Berlin B. "Petitioner for the Incorporation of Oklahoma City, 1890," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma* 36 (Spring 1958).
- Peterson, Susanne W. "The Spirit of Heritage Hills," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma* 48 (Spring 1970).
- Historian: Steve Eilers, May 7, 2009
3700 West 19th
Stillwater, OK 74074
steve.eilers@okstate.edu
- Dr. Charles Leider
Professor and Director of the Landscape Architecture Program
Horticulture and Landscape Architecture Department
360 AG Hall
Stillwater, OK 74078-6027
Office: (405) 744-5420
charles.leider@okstate.edu



Side view of mansion (Steve Eilers, 2009).



Front view of mansion (<http://www.oci.okstate.edu/shpo/NHRPICS/70000536.jpg>, accessed May 7, 2009).

ADDENDUM TO:
HENRY OVERHOLSER MANSION
Heritage Hills Historic and Architectural District
405 15th Street, Northwest
Oklahoma City
Oklahoma County
Oklahoma

HALS OK-17
HALS OK-17

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001